

December 4, 2017

Ms. Marlene Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

**Re: *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

The Alternative Connect America Model (A-CAM) is an innovative way to make funds available to support increased broadband deployment in Arkansas and other states. The Federal Communications Commission (“Commission”) is to be commended for creating the A-CAM mechanism and prioritizing the expansion of broadband in rural America. The undersigned Arkansas based A-CAM Electing Companies (Companies) elected to operate under the A-CAM program and to assume the obligations to expand broadband contained in the program. Those companies now write imploring the Commission to take action before the end of this year to authorize additional A-CAM funding up to \$200/month per eligible customer location. The additional funding will enable more rural consumers in Arkansas to have broadband connectivity that has become essential for education, economic development and healthcare.

The Companies have already committed to expanding broadband further if more funding is made available. The stage is set for expansion of broadband availability. All that is needed is action by the Commission to make the additional funding available. Work has already begun upgrading network infrastructure in our communities and our communities are eager for the Companies to further extend the reach of those networks to additional customers. By making the funds available now, the Commission will enable the Companies to design network upgrades in the most efficient manner to better serve our communities without the need to revisit projects and re-engineer for further expansion.

The additional funding will result in tangible, already identified gains in broadband availability. The seven companies in Arkansas that elected the revised offer of A-CAM support in January 2017 committed at that time to deploy broadband to a specific number of additional locations if further funding were made available by December 31, 2017. Collectively, additional funding up to \$200/month per location would result in 2,688 additional A-CAM funded locations with at least 10/1 Mbps broadband service in Arkansas, a 15 percent increase. Of that, 1,615 locations in Arkansas would have access to 25/3 Mbps broadband service, while 1,073 locations would newly have access to service of at least 10/1 Mbps. The number of A-CAM funded locations that would remain on “reasonable request” in Arkansas would decrease by 72 percent if funding is increased to this level.

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The additional funding to further extend broadband in our communities would result in broader economic and social benefits for rural Arkansans and benefit not just those areas but the entire state. The economic, educational and health benefits that would accrue to the state and its citizens would provide opportunities to compete and thrive in the global economy.

We implore the Commission to act now to make additional funding available so that the promise of broadband expansion contained in its original decision to provide A-CAM funding for up to \$200/month per eligible location can be realized.

Sincerely,

The Arkansas A-CAM Companies

Arkansas Telephone Company  
E. Ritter Telephone Company  
Mountain View Telephone Company  
Scott County Telephone Company  
Tri-County Telephone Company  
Walnut Hill Telephone Company  
Yelcot Telephone Company

cc: Chairman Ajit Pai  
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn  
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly  
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel  
Commissioner Brendan Carr